

powers by which we have been ruled in our history from 1663 to 1870, a period of 207 years. These changes have averaged about one for every twenty years! A striking commentary on the stability of governments, truly; and the more so when the history of North Carolina is usually characterized as comparatively uneventful! I shall close this paper with some observations upon these constitutions of Locke. Although they proved entirely impracticable, and were soon abrogated, they were of infinite service to the wise statesman, as proving conclusively the unworthiness of governmental theories concocted in the closet of the scholar. If intellect and study, abstracted from all contact with actual life, could under any circumstances find a government adapted to the wants of a distant people, it would seem that this great Englishman, who had sounded the depths and shallows of the human mind, would have done it. Yet his work, prepared with the utmost care and tried with patient fairness, proved an utter failure. The simple conceptions of the rude pioneer, squatting in the forest, without books, papers, or learning to read them, in regard to the laws he wanted, were worth all the fine meditations of the disciple of Aristotle and Plato. Laws are suggested by the daily recurring wants of actual life, and these wants are as varying as the conditions and circumstances by which men are surrounded. A government so framed as to be promptly responsive to these wants will constitute the perfection of human rule. Necessarily such an one must be made piece-meal.

Governments grow, and this growth is slow and natural, and dependent, like other products, upon soil, climate and cultivation. Hence the utter folly of the Lords Proprietors in employing a *metaphysician* to draft a constitution for their colony scarcely yet born, three thousand miles distant in a land he had never seen. Pre-natal baby garments are never remarkable as *fits*, and I fancy the crude, red faced, squalling